

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 4-11 are all of the pending claims. Claims 1 and 9 are independent claims.

As an initial matter, the Examiner has objected to claim 9 due to a minor typographical error. In response, Applicant has amended claim 9.

The Examiner has indicated that the new drawings are accepted. As such, Applicant respectfully submits a formal drawing sheet incorporating the changes approved by the Examiner in the Office Action mailed November 1, 2004.

Supplemental Amendment

As an initial matter, the Examiner has not commented on the dependent claims 10 and 11, which were previously added in the Supplemental Amendment filed on September 30, 2004 (more than one month before the Office Action dated November 1, 2004). Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner comment on the status of these previously presented claims.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and §103

Claims 1, 4, 5, and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being allegedly anticipated by Pederson et al. (US 6,261,115). Claims 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Pederson in view of Kouda et al. (US 5,120,225).

With respect to independent claims 1 and 9, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection. In the previous response, Applicant argued that Pederson's connector does not allow the engagement detector and the retainer to be moved to a third position at which the engagement detector is allowed to be forcibly moved to the first position, in a case where the lock canceller is

manipulated when the engagement detector is placed at the second position. Specifically, Applicant argued that when Pederson's positive assurance member 16 (engagement detector) locks the engagement member 84 (retainer) in place, the first tongue portion 72 (lock canceller) is not capable of being manipulated toward the connector housing 14. *See* Amendment dated July 6, 2004, at pgs. 10 & 11. *See* Pederson at Fig. 10d.

However, the Examiner was not convinced by these arguments. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that Pederson's engagement detector can be forced to a *first position* (Pederson at Fig. 10a) from a *third position* (Pederson at Fig. 10c). *See* Office Action at page pg. 3, para. 8. In view of this assertion, Applicant has provided additional remarks regarding this feature.

As an initial matter, Applicant believes that the Examiner does not consider the position of Pederson's Fig. 10d to correspond to the recited *second position*, but instead considered either the position shown in Pederson's Fig. 10b or the position shown in 10c as corresponding to the *second position*.

However, the positions shown in Pederson's Figs. 10b and 10c cannot correspond to the recited *second portion* at least because both independent claims 1 and 9 require that "the engagement detector locks the retainer at the complete engagement position when the engagement detector is placed at the second position." With respect to Pederson, this position must be one in which the positive assurance member 16 (engagement detector) locks the engagement member 84 (retainer) in place. However, the only position in Pederson in which the positive assurance member 16 locks the engagement member 84 in place is the position shown in Pederson's Fig. 10d.

However, as noted in our previous response, the first tongue portion 72 (lock canceller) is not capable of being manipulated at the position of Fig. 10d. Specifically, Peterson discloses at 8:24-35:

In this locked mode illustrated in FIG. 10d, the connectors housings 12 and 14 can not be disconnected because the surface 134 of the engagement member of the locking tongue 70 of the housing 14 cannot be removed from engagement with the surface 46 of the lug 40 of the housing 12. Such removal is prevented because the engagement of the regions 106 and 108 with the surface 172 prevents depression of the first tongue portion 72 in the direction 90, and engagement of the surface 168 with the surface 170 will prevent movement of the engagement member 84 in the direction 92.

In view of this disclosure, Pederson's connector is different from that of the claimed invention at least because the release of the connection from the *second position* (i.e., complete engagement position) of Fig. 10d cannot be based on the movement of the first tongue portion 72 (lock canceller), but is instead based on movement of the positive assurance member 16 (engagement detector).

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the rejections of independent claims 1 and 9, as well as the rejection of dependent claims 4-8 at least because of their dependency from claim 1.

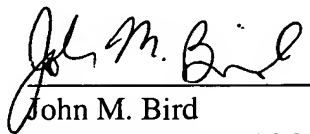
Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appln. No. 10/083,574

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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WASHINGTON OFFICE

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Applicants are attaching herewith one (1) new sheet of drawings, which includes FIGS.
8A and 8B.

The submitted drawing sheet has been approved by the Examiner in the Office Action
mailed November 1, 2004.

Attachment: New Sheet